

Rage

23 January 2022

Call to Worship Psalm 19

In you, O LORD, we take refuge;
let us never be put to shame.

**In your righteousness deliver us and rescue us;
incline your ear to us and save us.**

Be to us a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress, to save us,

for you are our rock and our fortress.

Rescue us, O our God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

**For you, O Lord, are our hope,
Our trust, O LORD, from our youth.
Our praise is continually of you.**

I serve a risen Saviour

Alfred Henry Ackley

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today.
I know that He is living, whatever men may say.
I see His hand of mercy; I hear His voice of cheer;
And just the time I need Him He's always near.

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me a
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And though my heart grows weary, I never will despair;
I know that He is leading, Through all the stormy blast;
The day of His appearing Will come at last.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs To Jesus Christ the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, The Help of all who find,
None other is so loving, So good and kind.

Reading 1 Jeremiah 1:4-10

- ⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,
⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a
boy.” ⁷ But the LORD said to me,
“Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’;
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.
⁸ Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the LORD.”
⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said
to me,
“Now I have put my words in your mouth.
¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

Reflection 1

There used to be a phrase that was used by certain people when describing those they thought to be of lower status who had done well for themselves – they were talked of as being, ‘Above their station.’ In other words they didn’t deserve to be where they were. Often found in conjunction with the whole idea of class it is less common to hear in New Zealand. But that doesn’t mean we don’t say it or think it...

It is commonly found in ‘grown-ups’ speaking about young people. ‘Who does that young whippersnapper think he is talking like that.’ I have had occasion where I catch myself think that a person is too young for the role they have. Sometimes that contains an element of jealousy that I don’t get to do something like that. Sometimes it is a disbelief that they have the skills or experience necessary to do a good job.

It is a particularly strong belief in many Asian and African cultures that years are more important than ability. I once met youth representatives of the church in Mozambique, the youngest of whom was 30 with children of his own.

So when I read the way God appointed Jeremiah, who was probably around 17 years old, to pluck up and pull down nations and kingdoms, I am not at all surprised that Jeremiah came back with, 'I am only a boy.' Jeremiah knew the anger that his culture would visit on him for daring to speak out about things he was not expected to know anything about.

I wonder how similar our reaction may sometimes be when people younger or less experienced than ourselves dare speak into the experience of the church. It makes you think...

Notices

Bible Study, 10:30am, 03 February in the Church Lounge.

'Where to from here?' is a short 4-6 week conversation aimed at asking questions about how the church might be in the future and how can we help and not hinder what God is doing. Drawing on Scripture, current events, personal experience and anything else we can find to help us think about what is next. There's no agenda apart from listening to God and to each other. Signup sheet for the, 'Where to from here?' conversation.

The Peace

Prayer of adoration and confession

For the birds of this incredible land

The Kaka and Kea

Kokako , Pukeko and Kiwi

Hear us Lord, **as we give you thanks**

For the native forests of our land

Filled with Beech and Rimu

Kauri and Totara and Kowhai

Hear us Lord, **as we give you thanks**

For the rivers and lakes of Aotearoa

The Waitaki and Tekapo

Hauroko, Clutha and the Waikato

Hear us Lord, **as we give you thanks**

For the mountains that give us such joy

Aoraki and Aspiring

Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro

Hear us Lord, **as we give you thanks**

We live in such a wonderful place
Full of joy and surprises
Beauty and grandeur
Forgive us for the times we rush past
Giving little or no thought for the blessings
Surrounding us
Teach us to deepen our appreciation
For the gift of our place in the world
We bring our personal confessions before the Lord
May you travel in the loving forgiveness of God
Now and forever
Amen

Celebrate

Don Moen

Celebrate, Jesus celebrate
Celebrate, Jesus celebrate
Celebrate, Jesus celebrate
Celebrate, Jesus celebrate

He is risen, He is risen
And He lives forevermore
He is risen, He is risen
Come on and celebrate
The resurrection of our Lord

Reading 2 Luke 4:21-23

²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" ²³ He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.' "

Reflection 2

I can totally imagine the disciples sitting listening to Jesus and thinking, 'Stop! Quite while you're ahead!' You really don't want to upset these folks – it's your hometown after all. Remember that you're just the whippersnapper around here, take the praise and run.

What do you think might have happened if Jesus had stopped here, accepted the praise, and moved on? It could have been like Edmund Hillary climbing to the Everest Base Camp, looking up at the mountain and saying, 'That's a pretty amazing view, I can go home now.' Or maybe like Richie McCaw playing a couple of games of rugby, scoring a few tries, and then saying, 'That was fun, what else can I do?'

Edmund's friends would have been really impressed that he had got as far as he did. And Richie's parents would have been very proud of the tries he scored. But they would never have been remembered by a nation for their achievements.

Thing is, those achievements came at a huge cost and I am quite sure that there would have been many people along the way who would have said they couldn't do what they did, that it was foolish to even try. But they went ahead anyway. And we remember them.

Jesus went ahead anyway. He knew there were some things the people of his hometown needed to hear. He also knew they wouldn't be pleased to hear them. I wonder how we would react if a young man from Oamaru came and told us some home truths after we had invited him to speak at church. Would we hear it as God's word to us here? Or would we be less impressed? What do you think?

Shine, Jesus, shine

Graham Kendrick

Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth You now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence
From the shadows into Your radiance
By the blood, I may enter Your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness

Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me

Offering

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning>

God who created us, as we gather to worship you, we are conscious that we are all one body in Christ. When one part of the body is hurting, the whole body is wounded; when healing happens, the whole body is blessed. May our giving this morning bring love to the parts of Christ's body that are feeling unloved and forgotten; and may it bring justice and mercy to those parts that are oppressed and burdened. In our giving, may we find the joy of blessing the whole body of Christ. In his holy name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for ourselves and others

For the people of Tonga, working their way through mountains of ash, desperate for clean water and rebuilding homes destroyed in the tsunami

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayers**

For the sufferers of long Covid, relearning how to live, searching for answers to regaining their health. For the doctors and nurses struggling to care for them.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayers**

For the broken and hurting in our community, finding their solace in all manner of damaged and damaging ways. For the few who work tirelessly to encourage them and assist them to renew themselves.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayers**

For ourselves and those we love. Those travelling, the unwell, those struggling with life changes that affect their independence and sense of self.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayers**

All these prayers we bring through our loving Lord, Jesus, who taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, holy be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and

deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Reading 3 Luke 4:24-30

²⁴ And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Reflection 3

What Jesus has to say next is a little odd. There were lots of widows in Israel but God sent Elijah to a foreigner. There were lots of lepers in Israel, but God only cleansed a Syrian. To understand the reaction of the synagogue we need to know what Jesus meant and why it mattered so much.

In both stories the foreigners were shown to be obedient to God's instructions, in clear contrast to the people of Israel at the time. So Jesus is saying that he will take his message of Good News to people who will be obedient, and implying that the people of Nazareth will be just as unwilling to listen and act in accordance with God's will as their predecessors. In effect Jesus was accusing them of being disobedient to God's call. It's little wonder they were angry. We are told they were filled with rage and intended to throw him off a cliff and probably stone him. In New Zealand we would think that was just a little overboard, but there are still places in the world where religious accusations can lead to death.

Rage, anger, fury, wrath. All words that point to a loss of control. But there is another option to losing control. That option is to acknowledge our anger and disappointment and to use it to fuel an improvement. I have no doubt that many of us are disappointed and even angry over the way our church is fading away. One possible way to deal with that is to search out the young men and women who would make us uncomfortable. Who might seem to unfairly accuse us. Then listen to them and let their energy and drive to climb mountains and win games help us to become the obedient foreigners who

share the Good News with joy and abandon. Not a simple or easy option. Perhaps rage needn't be all bad after all. What do you think?

We Pray

Good, good Father. You see us, locked in our habits and hopes, dreaming of times past, and you love us. You long to draw us near to you, to strengthen our hand to share the Good News. Help us find ways to unlock the passion of Christ in our hearts that we might create hope and faith in the lives of everyone around us. Amen.

God of wonders

Chris Tomlin

Lord of all creation

Of water, earth, and sky

The heavens are Your tabernacle

Glory to the Lord on High

God of wonders beyond our galaxy

You are holy, holy

The universe declares Your majesty

You are holy, holy

Lord of heaven and earth

Lord of heaven and earth

Early in the morning

I will celebrate the light

And as I stumble through the darkness

I will call Your name by night

Hallelujah to the Lord of heaven and earth

Benediction and Grace

As we go from here, may we find the courage to hear criticism and use it to grow in our faith and in our actions.

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,

and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.